

*With updates from the Indiana State Department of Agriculture*

# *The Harvest TIMES*



**February 24, 2006**



**Lt. Governor  
Becky Skillman**



**Agriculture Director  
Andy Miller**

## **Where we've been in January...**

**Volume 2 Issue 2**

### **IN THIS ISSUE:**

- Ø Skillman Awards Outstanding Leadership at ISDA
- Ø Central American Trade Mission a Success for Indiana Delegation
- Ø Pork Studies Reinforce Direction Taken in Indiana Agriculture
- Ø Indiana Conservation Partnership Unveils Strategic Plan

### **Skillman Names Outstanding Leadership at ISDA**

On February 13, Lt. Governor Becky Skillman and Indiana Agriculture Director Andy Miller presented the first five Becky S. Skillman Awards for Outstanding Leadership in the Indiana State Department of Agriculture. This new award honors ISDA employees who demonstrate accomplishments above and beyond their normal call of duty and whose leadership bears the hallmark of a true public servant.

"It is a privilege that the Lt. Governor allowed us to create this important award in her honor," said Miller. "She is an excellent example of the leadership and character we wish to model in this new award. In ISDA's inaugural year, we have seen remarkable dedication and leadership by many of our staff members. It is this leadership that has allowed us to accomplish amazing things in a short amount of time."

Lt. Governor Skillman joined Miller in congratulating the five award winners in a ceremony at the ISDA offices. Each recipient received a commemorative plaque.

Ryan West – Program Manager for Bioenergy, for his work in launching the BioTown, USA project

Ann Schmelzer – Special Assistant to the Deputy Director, for her efforts in coordinating the Central American Agricultural Trade Mission

Dave Lefforge – Resource Specialist, Division of Soil Conservation, for his dedicated and continual service to soil conservation in the State of Indiana

Doug Wolf – Resource Specialist, Division of Soil Conservation,

**Lt. Governor Skillman discussed the Indiana Conservation Partnership during the annual Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Conference on January 19.**



"Sound conservation policy and practices are crucial to the future of Indiana agriculture," remarked Lt. Governor Skillman. "I applaud the Partnership for taking a team approach to strengthen our direction in land conservation. This sends a strong signal to Congress that Indiana believes this must be a major focus of the 2007 Federal Farm Bill."

**Agriculture Director Andy Miller spoke during a Terre Haute Rotary meeting and discussed the Major Moves transportation program.**

According to Miller, many agribusinesses in Indiana have concerns about transportation. Major Moves addresses our bridge and road needs. With those projects funded we will also be able to address our shortline rail issues. These rails must be improved because they are often the only way our smaller communities, where agricultural ventures tend to locate, can link up to Class I rail lines. If the General Assembly fails to adopt Major Moves, I fear many of our smaller communities would not attract business opportunities that are crucial to their futures."

for his dedicated and continual service to soil conservation in the State of Indiana

Larry Osterholz – Resource Specialist, Division of Soil Conservation, for his dedicated and continual service to soil conservation in the State of Indiana

[Back to top](#)

**Trade Mission a Success for Indiana Delegation**



With concrete business leads in place, Lt. Governor Becky Skillman announced the success of the Central America Trade Mission. The 34-member delegation returned Friday, January 13 from the six-day mission to Guatemala, Costa Rica and Panama. Lt. Governor Skillman and Congressman Dan Burton led this first American trade mission to the region since Congress ratified the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA).

"We went to Central America to bring home opportunities for hardworking Hoosiers, and I think the follow-up phone calls, trips, and collaborations already planned show a level of success far beyond what we anticipated," said Lt. Governor Skillman who also serves as Indiana Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development. "Our goal was to build relationships and lay the groundwork for future economic development. We accomplished those goals and then some. I believe we will have business deals on the table in the next six months."

The Indiana delegation, composed of government, commodity organization, academic, food and agribusiness leaders, held as many as 80 meetings as part of the trade mission. More than two-thirds of those meetings already have resulted in plans for follow-up actions. Delegates have begun to forge business relationships by agreeing to send product samples to contacts made in Central America and scheduling return trips to the region. There is even talk of a reverse trade mission from Guatemalan food processors.

To read more about the trip, visit the Trade Mission blog Web site at <http://www.in.gov/isda/trademission/index.html>.

[Back to top](#)

**Lt. Governor Skillman and Agriculture's Deputy Director Beth Bechdol spoke to Indiana Pork Producers such as 2005 IPPA President Alan Wilhoite (standing) and his son, Andrew, during the Indiana Pork Producers annual meeting on Tuesday, January 31.**



Lt. Governor Skillman talked about successes from the Central American Trade mission during the annual pork industry conference. Because of the trade mission, pork industry representatives found opportunities with a restaurant chain that wants fresh pork products, as well as with a distributor that wants to import pork products and further process them to make value-added products.

#### **Lt. Governor helps break ground on new ethanol plant.**

Agriculture's Program Manager of Bioenergy Development Ryan West; Bill Henderson, executive director of the Montgomery County Economic Development; Peter Schram, greater Indiana farm service group leader for Cargill AgHorizons; David Black, AS Alliances Biofuels president; Lt. Governor Becky Skillman; Ruth Kimmelshue, vice president and commercial leader of Cargill AgHorizons; and Montgomery County commissioner Phillip Bane proudly break the ceremonial first ground for a \$100 million ethanol plant near Linden, Ind.

## **Pork Studies Reinforce New Direction in Agriculture**

Lt. Governor Becky Skillman and Indiana Agriculture Director Andy Miller released two preliminary studies on the pork industry commissioned by the Indiana State Department of Agriculture. The first, *The Changing U.S. Pork Industry and Implications for Future Growth*, is an overview of the industry. The second, *Doubling Hog Production*, is an in-depth look at the Indiana pork industry through the eyes of the state's producers.

Both reports provide an economic overview of the industry as a whole. The pork industry is highly integrated, and that trend will continue. The industry has seen rapid consolidation during the last 10 years, and today two-thirds of the independently-owned hog operations use long-term contracts to stabilize their price and market risk. Future consolidation will have a similar impact. Specifically, smaller farrow-to-finish operations of less than 600 sows may find it harder to compete in the current commodity market. Despite this trend, there is an emerging market opportunity for specialty pork products, and many of these operations could take advantage of this new trend.

While providing an overview of the pork industry, the *Doubling Hog Production* report also offered results of a statewide industry survey. The goal of this survey was to collect opinions about challenges the industry faces and reaction to ISDA's goal of doubling hog production. When asked specifically about ISDA's goal for doubling pork production, Indiana's pork producers are pleased that the administration recognizes their sector's importance to the agricultural industry and state's economy. However, producers are concerned that growth takes place at the same pace as demand so the market will not suffer.

Full texts of *The Changing U.S. Pork Industry and Implications for Future Growth* and *Doubling Hog Production* reports can be found on ISDA's Web site at [www.in.gov/isda/pubs/index.html](http://www.in.gov/isda/pubs/index.html).

[Back to top](#)

## **Indiana Conservation Partnership Unveils New Plan**

[Back to top](#)

### Where we're going in February...

**Agriculture Director Andy Miller will join his counterparts in Washington, D.C., for the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture Midyear Congerence Feb. 15-20.**

**ISDA Deputy Director Beth Bechdol will speak to the Indiana Society of Foresters on Feb. 23 at McCormick's Creek State Park.**

USDA Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Chuck Conner and Indiana Lt. Governor and Secretary of Agriculture Becky Skillman stood beside State Soil Conservation Board Chair Bob Eddleman and other representatives of Indiana's Conservation Partnership (ICP) as they unveiled the Partnership's road map to strengthen and improve Indiana soil and water quality. The announcement took place during the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation District's (IASWCD) Annual Legislative Breakfast.

Titled *20/20: The Indiana Conservation Partnership's Vision for the Future*, the plan is designed to help the Partnership utilize and leverage their time and resources to create and take advantage of future opportunities.

When meeting last year to develop the plan, the Partnership agreed "the consolidated power of a partnership is much stronger than the individual resources of agencies and organizations." One example of this cooperation is the restructuring of the ISDA's Division of Soil Conservation field staff organization to work cooperatively with NRCS field staff to deliver technical assistance at the local level.

In *20/20: The Indiana Conservation Partnership's Vision for the Future* the Partnership identified six strategies to carry out their initiative to conserve and improve Indiana's soil and water resources.

**Delivery System** - Develop an effective, efficient and streamlined conservation delivery system that addresses local resource needs by leveraging local, state, and federal resources to their full potential.

**Accountability** - Utilize an integrated accountability system that tracks resource driven results.

**Leadership Development** - Elevate the significance of conservation in Indiana to attract and retain strong leadership.

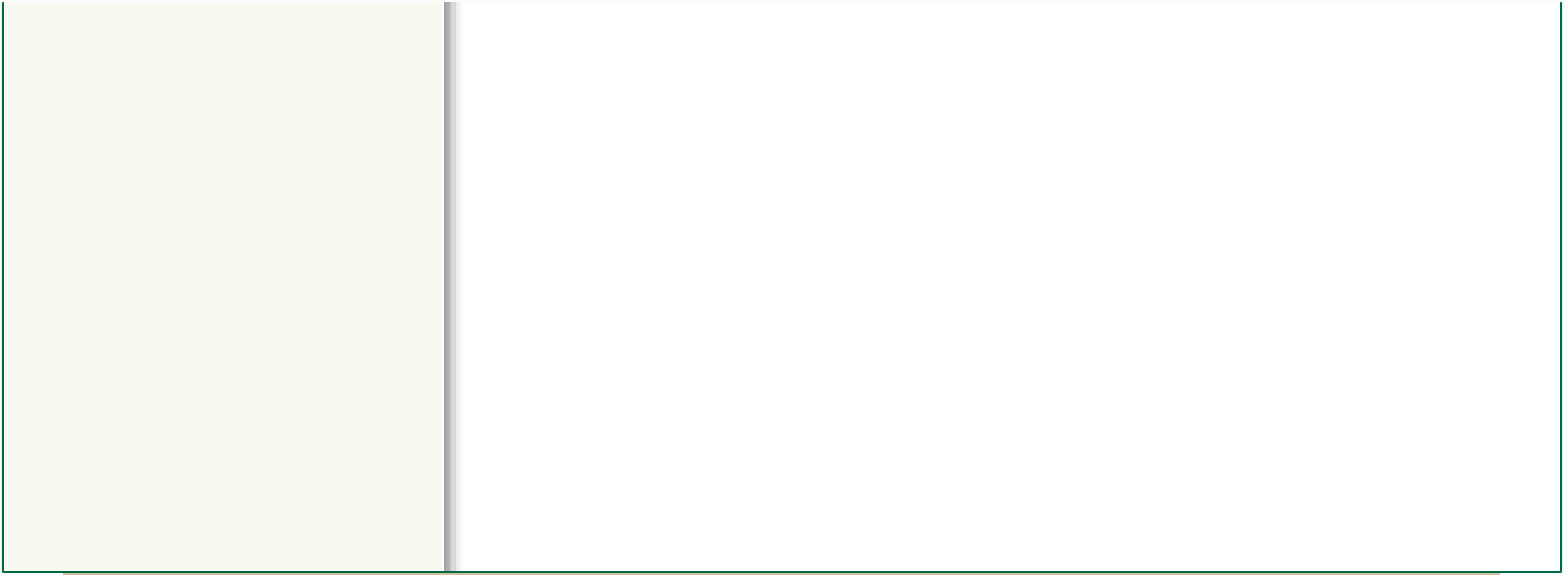
**Technology** - Utilize the latest technology available to deliver and measure conservation.

**Outreach** - Communicate success stories throughout the local, state and federal system that will increase awareness of all the services our partners provide, educating Hoosiers about the benefits of conservation and attracting resources needed to carry out the plan.

**Funding** - Recognize any efforts to make the strategic plan a success will require additional funds and resources, and they will develop and use local, state and federal funding opportunities to further the plan.

For more information on the Indiana Conservation Partnership's Strategic Plan, visit ISDA's Division of Soil Conservation Web site at <http://www.in.gov/isda/soil/>.

[Back to top](#)



The Indiana State Department of Agriculture was created in April of 2005 to advance our state's food and agriculture system. ISDA has two main goals: to make agriculture a key part of the state's economic comeback and to establish Indiana as a leader in the global agricultural economy. Our vision is for Indiana to be a global center for food and agriculture innovation and commercialization.

Lt. Governor Becky Skillman | Indiana State Department of Agriculture